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II.—*Actuality.*

The actual is a process, and is ever the same; its two sides, are the real and the potential, and the real is manifested no more and no less than the potentialities, in the process which constantly goes on. The real is annulled by the potential, and the latter becomes the real, only to be again replaced. If in the circle of possibilities which make up the entire being of a thing, that which is real bears a small proportion to the rest, the real is very unstable, for the potentialities are to that extent actively negative to it. But let the sphere of the real be relatively large, and we have a more stable being—there is less to destroy it and more to sustain it—it is a higher order of being. If the whole circle of its being were real it would coincide with its actuality, it would be self-related, exist for itself, and this would be the existence of the *Idea*.

III.—*The Actual is the Rational.*

The highest aim is toward perfection; and this is pursued in the cancelling of the finite, partial or incomplete, by adding to it its other or complement—that which it lacks of the Total or Perfect. Since this complement is the *potential*, and since this potential is and can be the only agent that acts upon and modifies the real, it follows that all process is pursuant of the highest aim; and since the actual is the process itself, it follows that the actual is the realization of the Best or of the Rational.

A somewhat has a low order of existence if the sphere of its reality is small compared to that of its potentiality. But the lower its order the more swift and sure are the potentialities in their work. Hence no matter how bad anything is, the very best thing is being wrought upon it. Seize the moments of the world-history, and state precisely what they lacked of the complete realization of spirit, and one will see clearly that each phase perished by having just that added to it which it most of all needed.

IV.—*“The Form of Eternity.”*

To think according to Reason is to think things under the form of Eternity, says Spinoza (*Res sub quadam specie aeternitatis percipere*). The Form of Eternity is what we have found as the true actual. The Phenomenal world is the constant spectacle wherein each and all is placed under the form of Eternity. When this is done, all *immediate* (or mechanical) being appears in a state of transition; all *mediated* being appears as a merely relative, i. e. as existing in what lies beyond it; all *absolutely mediated* (i. e. self-determined) being appears in a state of development. In the first and second stages the individual loses its identity. In the third stage the process is one of unfolding, and hence the continual realizing of a more vivid personal identity. Thus the Form of Eternity is to the conscious being the realization of his Immortality.

A THOUGHT ON SHAKESPEARE.

By ANNA C. BRACKETT.

To say that Shakespeare excels others by virtue of the genius which enables him to throw himself for the time completely into each of the characters he represents, is to say a very common-place thing, and yet it will bear repeating.

His spirit was so many-sided, so universal, that it was able to take all forms and perfectly to fit itself to each, so that he al-

ways gives us a consistent character. His personages are individuals whose every word agrees with every other they have spoken, and while the spirit which moves in them is Shakespeare, he is all, yet no one of them.

“The water unchanged in every case,
Doth take on the figure of the vase.”

He does not consciously go to work to

fashion a character, nor does he ask himself what that character shall say under the given circumstances, but his soul, being capable of all, takes on for the time the form of the character, and then speaks the things which are most natural to itself in that form. So entirely is this the case, that a comparison of the way in which one of his personages conducts himself under different circumstances, is sure to amaze us as we discover the fine touches by which the unity of the character is preserved. Goethe's characters grow—are in a state of becoming. Shakespeare's are grown: they are crystallized. The problem with Goethe is, the development of a character through growth; Shakespeare's: given a certain character and a certain collision, how will the given character demean itself? The common man with an effort could tell what *he himself* would have done under such and such circumstances, but Shakespeare could have done *all things*, and grasping one side of himself he holds it, and shows it for one person, and another for another. He never confuses—never changes. The divine inspiration sways him. The power to do this, the Universal which can take on all and be all, is genius.

This is not claimed as new in any sense. I simply wish to illustrate its truth with regard to the suitors of Portia, by noticing how perfectly the feelings which each expresses after the result of his choice is apparent, are the outcome of the feelings which decided the choice.

The three sets of comments on the caskets and their mottoes, betray three entirely different men. Their minds move differently; they are actuated habitually by different motives, and the results of the same failure in Morocco and Arragon are noticeably different. They are placed in precisely the same circumstances. They are both disappointed, but observe how differently they demean themselves. Morocco wastes no words. His mood changes instantly from a doubting hope to despondency and heartfelt grief, so powerful that it deprives him of all speech. He goes at once. But Arragon speaks as if he had been deceived. First—"How much unlike art thou to Portia!" That is, I was

led to suppose one thing; I have been misled. Then—"How much unlike my hopes!" but, indignation and wounded pride gaining the ascendancy—"and my deservings!" He re-reads the motto, and grows more angry still. He has not been treated fairly, and at last, forgetting himself, he turns round to Portia with the fierce, direct question, "Are my deserts no better?" Portia shows her appreciation of his state of mind by her evasion, plainly intimating that he had gone too far in his manner of addressing her. His very words are rough and uncourteous in their abruptness. His question was rude because so personal. In his haste he has not even noticed the writing, which now surprises him, as, feeling her quiet rebuke, he turns back to the casket to hide his embarrassment, and he reads. During the reading he begins to be conscious that he has been angry without reason, and that he has not had control enough of himself to conceal the fact. That he is not a fool is shown by his consciousness that he has behaved like one in giving away to his temper, and as this consciousness begins to dawn on him, he is ashamed of himself for having been provoked, and desires to be gone as soon as possible. He has had a revelation of himself which is not agreeable, and he turns to depart, no longer angry with Portia, but so angry with himself that he almost forgets to bid the lady adieu. But suddenly reminded that she is there, he assumes again his usual, courtly, outside self, and half in apology for his anger and rudeness, which might have led her to suppose that he would forget his promise, half to recall himself to himself, he awkwardly ends the scene by assuring her that he means to keep his word.

Now, why should Morocco never for one instant lose his gentlemanly bearing, while Arragon so wholly forgets himself? Turn back to the comments before the choice, and we have the key at once.

In their remarks on the leaden chest we see at first how much more quickly than Morocco, Arragon rushes at conclusions. The former becomes at once thoughtful, and does not pass by even that unattractive metal without careful pausing. After

reading all three mottoes once, he reads slowly the inscription on the leaden casket again, and begins to repeat it a second time. He feels thoroughly how much depends on the choice, and is self-distrustful. Finding that he can gain no suggestion from the lady, he commends himself for help to the gods before he proceeds. He is not the man to be daunted by a threat, and thinks he detects in that very threat a false ring. He is conscious of high motives, but not in vanity, and he decides adversely, giving a reason. But Arragon, before surveying the whole ground, decides at once about the first he sees, and the summary way in which he dismisses all consideration of the leaden casket, savors strongly of self-esteem. There is a sort of bravado in the sudden words without a moment's pause: "You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard!" The very use of "shall" with the second person, forces into view the will of the speaker. He does not turn to Portia. He is quite capable of directing his own actions without help from any god.

As Morocco considers the silver, the principal thing that attracts his attention is its "virgin hue." (Remark that Arragon under the same circumstances calls it a "treasure house.") He again begins thoughtfully to repeat; and again mark the self-distrust. There is an exquisitely delicate touch of this in—

"If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough."

Relying on the judgment of others, rather than on his own, but conscious too that there is good ground for the estimation in which he knows himself held, the chivalrous admiration with which he looks up to the woman he desires, comes in here suddenly with a doubt whether if all that is thought of him is deserved, it is enough to win a pearl of so great price. His conscious manhood refuses, however, to weaken itself by doubting, and he again repeats the clause on which he stopped before. He goes back to the thought of the estimation in which he is held; he thinks of his noble birth, of his princely fortune, of his graces, and qualities of breeding, and enumerating all these, he proves his title to a better nobility by the sudden thought that the love he bears her is enough to

make him deserve her were she never so precious, and on that, and that alone, he rests his claim. But before deciding he will read again from the gold casket, and his exclamations on it are only a continuation of his previous thought. It seems perfectly plain to him that this must be the fortunate casket. In his generous love he forgets himself entirely, and as it were to show her how wholly he believes in her, he makes his selection here. Why should he be angry at the failure? He had no self-assertion to be wounded. If he deserved her, it was only because he loved her; and if he did not deserve her, it was only because she was more than any one could deserve.

As Arragon, after passing by the lead, turns to the gold, he begins to be a little more cautious, and repeats like Morocco. But his mind, instead of turning at once to Portia as the only prize in the world wholly desirable, begins from a lofty eminence of superiority to criticise others whom he calls the "fool multitude." He will not choose what many men desire, because he prefers to keep out of the ranks. No democrat, but a proud aristocrat is he, and so the gold casket is set aside. After reading from the next, he begins to criticise again. It seems as if he stood outside of all the world and coolly reviewed it. On consideration he is quite sure that there is no danger of his losing his place even if "true honor were purchased by the merit of the wearer," and basing his choice on his belief that he deserves success, he orders peremptorily the opening of the "treasure house."

Is it not most natural that with such feelings, such self-complacency, he should be angry when he finds he has made a mistake? Nothing can be more galling to a proud spirit than to discover that the estimation set upon him by others is lower than that he sets upon himself.

It was not our purpose to compare Bassanio's comments with the others. Let us say only that he evidently prizes sincerity above all other virtues, and prefers a leaden casket that is lead all through, to a golden one that is gold only on the outside, and so he wins the woman, who, as she shows us a moment afterwards, is sincere enough to deserve to be won.